



## THE SUDAN REFERENDUM: HISTORY AND FUTURE

**Moderator:**

**Warren Hoge**, Vice President of External Relations

**Speakers:**

**Terje Rød-Larsen**, President of the International Peace Institute

**Hilde F. Johnson**, Deputy Executive Director of UNICEF and author of *Waging Peace in Sudan: The Inside Story of the Negotiations that Ended Africa's Longest Civil War*

**Suliman Baldo**, Africa Program Director, International Centre for Transitional Justice

**Susan Page**, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, United States Department of State

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**Terje Rød-Larsen:**

Ladies and gentlemen, I'm very pleased to wish you welcome to this IPI Policy Forum which is, of course as you all know, about the Sudan referendum: Its History and Future. I'm very proud to say and particularly to you, Hilde, that actually this meeting is record-breaking because there's never been in the history of this center so many people who have confirmed their attendance. So I was actually very happy that it started snowing, hoping that most will not be able to make it, and usually it's the other way around-- when we have bad weather, we fear that people will not show up.

It is a great pleasure to welcome you, Hilde, to IPI and to the Trygve Lie Center, and particularly since it's the Trygve Lie Center because it's named after an old colleague of yours. He was a Norwegian Cabinet Minister for many years as you have been, but also, incidentally, Secretary-General of the United Nations, Trygve Lie. And, of course, it is indeed a particular pleasure to invite you to this Norwegian room with Norwegian art on the walls and the Norwegian birch, actually, on the other wall.

It is actually, I realized this morning, very difficult to introduce you because I read your bio, and I would need about half an hour to go through it. But on the other hand, it's very easy to introduce you because everybody knows who you are because you're not only a political celebrity on the political firmament of your country, Norway. You are also well known by everybody here in New York, and you're also one of these rare and unique personalities who actually knows everybody. Hilde is, as you all know, the Deputy Executive Director of UNICEF since August of 2007. She has had two long stints as a cabinet minister in

Norway. She was twice Minister for International Development. Hilde has extensive knowledge, not only in her ministerial capacity, but also in a variety of other capacities in conflict resolution and peace building. And, in particular, she has been over a number of years steeped in the conflicts in Sudan, and she was party to virtually, I think, all the deliberations between the two figures in the negotiations, the late Dr. John Garang and Ali Osman Taha. So we couldn't find a person who is better equipped to address us on the referendum, its history, and the future than Hilde. So, Hilde, it is an exquisite pleasure for me to wish you welcome here to give your speech, but before I give you the floor, I will give the floor to the illustrious, one and only Warren Hoge of IPI who will introduce the other speakers. Warren, you have the floor.

**Warren Hoge:**

Thank you, Terje. I apologize for the fact that there aren't enough seats. Blame it on the allure of Hilde Johnson, and be grateful that it snowed, because really we woke up this morning thinking, "How can we possibly accommodate all the people who have said they wanted to come?"

We're calling today's policy forum, as Terje has said, "The Sudan Referendum: History and Future." And as you well know, the future is now, since the momentous referendum that quite likely will lead to the creation of a new state in Africa occurs this Sunday, just two days from now.

We have three people here on stage with me who have intimate knowledge of the history part and informed ideas about the future. Our speaker is Hilde F. Johnson, author of the book *Waging Peace in Sudan: The Inside Story of the Negotiations that Ended Africa's Longest Civil War*. Hilde is, of course, now, as Terje noted, the Deputy Executive Director of UNICEF, but she asked that I emphasize that today she is speaking not as a UNICEF official, but as the author of the book.

And we have two distinguished discussants, Susan Page on my left is Deputy Assistant Secretary for African Affairs at the US State Department. A Harvard-trained lawyer, she was instrumental in negotiating and drafting key portions of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement known in shorthand as the CPA. In her capacity at that time of being the legal advisor to the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, IGADs' Secretariat for Peace in Sudan.

Suliman Baldo is the Director of the Africa program at the International Crisis Group. He is a widely known expert who has worked in conflict resolution, human rights, development, and relief activities all across Africa. In his native Sudan, he has lectured at the University of Khartoum and created a Center for Development Services. You have full biographies of all three of them in your program.

Now the reason the book is such an illuminating look at modern-day Sudan is that Hilde, then the Minister of International Development of Norway, was deeply involved in the negotiations that produced the CPA. The CPA was signed in Nairobi City Stadium nearly six years ago on January 9th, 2005. As you know, one of its main provisions was the scheduling of Sunday's referendum.

Hilde's book is a compelling one. It's rich in detail, anecdote, and portraits of the principal players like the ones that Terje just mentioned, the late John Garang, his successor, Salva Kiir, and Vice President Ali Osman Taha. This was a dramatic time in contemporary African history when ideologues had to become pragmatists and enemies partners for peace. The book is for sale at the door, and if the books run out, there is a voucher system for purchase there also available, and you can just sign it, and the book will be sent to you.

At the signing ceremony that I mentioned a moment ago, Hilde, then speaking in behalf of Norway and the IGAD Partners Forum, said the following: "The signing of an agreement is only a first step. Implementation will be the test of true commitment." Those words, it seems to me, could just as easily apply to Sunday's referendum. Hilde, the floor is yours.

**Hilde F. Johnson:**

Thank you very much. I hope it works. Here we go. Excellencies, I see some of you are here. Ladies and gentlemen, and friends of the people of Sudan, Sudan is at the brink. The referendum, as we all know, in south Sudan starts on Sunday, two days from now. Voting will go on for another six days, up to January 15, and we might have to wait until February 1<sup>st</sup>, hopefully a little before, before we have the result.

The Comprehensive Peace Agreement, the CPA, between the government of Sudan and the SPLM/A, the Sudan People's Liberation Movement and Army, in 2005, as we just heard, guaranteed Southern Sudanese to opt for unity or secession, or independence as Southern Sudanese prefer to call it. We all know that a partition of the country is the likely outcome and we can soon witness one of the first divisions of an African state since the colonial era. While expectations are high in Southern Sudan, there is wariness and worry in other parts of the country.

The CPA ended a twenty-year civil war pitting the Southern Sudanese population against successive Arab Muslim regimes in Khartoum. The war, which we know ultimately claimed around two million deaths and twice as many displaced, was finally brought to an end. There is now a lot of drumbeat that the war may start again, although recent signals last week pointed somewhat in a different direction.

But before starting to talk about scenarios, let me spend a minute or two on the CPA itself. The agreement was not a north-south agreement as it has often been labeled. It was an agreement intended to transform Sudan. The idea was not only to silence the guns; it was also to create a just Sudan where all marginalized peoples had a fair say in the running of the country and in the allocation of its resources. The agreement catered for that and for a democratic transformation.

This was the vision of Dr. John Garang, the chairman and leader of the SPLM/A: the new Sudan, a just Sudan. On this basis, unity would be given a chance in the interim period, until the referendum was held.

Why were the guns silenced at this moment? Firstly, the timing was right. Khartoum wanted to be among the good guys after September 11 and be off the terrorist-supporting lists, and both sides had gone through a process of internal consolidation. The SPLM/A was also ready to negotiate.

Secondly, the leadership was right. The Machakos Protocol was negotiated between delegations from both sides, under the competent leadership of General Sumbeiywo, the Kenyan mediator, and with assistance of people like Susan Page and others in Naivasha, who at the time worked with the IGAD negotiation team. The rest of the agreement was the result of the partnership between Dr. John and Ali Osman Taha, the first Vice President of Sudan.

It was Taha who made the move in August 2003. The talks had stalled. He called me one evening in Oslo, and wanted me to convince Dr. John to negotiate with him personally. And as I reveal in my book *Waging Peace in Sudan*, Taha had

tried to get Garang to the negotiation table repeatedly, ever since 1990, in fact. He traveled to the UK five to six times to meet with Dr. John's trusted people to push for an appeal for such a meeting. Now, thirteen years later, with the added push from international actors, Dr. John finally agreed. But Taha had to wait for almost three days before Garang appeared, and he was actually packing his bags when he came.

Very little is known publicly about this negotiation process. In fact, the two leaders negotiated for sixteen months almost continuously and behind closed doors, alone in one room without a mediator. As Taha later told me, they saw the talks much as family business. They felt that the presence of a third party was slightly awkward and preferred to sort out their problems alone within the family. I don't think any other peace agreement has been negotiated in this way and with this level of detail, and those of you who've glanced at the agreement will see.

It is this unique process and these personal dynamics that is described for the first time in my book. Both the former foes were changed by this process. They became partners in peace and they became friends. It was quite amazing to witness, but the process was also tough and painstakingly slow. As Taha described it in the Security Council in November 2004, "Peace had not been achieved through maneuvers and posturing, but was a result of digging with bare hands," end quote. I can testify to that and the book shows it. The two leaders got stuck quite often and were dependent both on pressure and international help to move the process forward.

Thirdly, therefore, the international community was instrumental in silencing the guns. The Troika—the US, the UK, and Norway—were coordinated, coherent, and decisive in support of the talks. The negotiations would never have been completed without these intense and unflagging efforts including at the political level. We were literally waging peace in Sudan.

While I became a kind of personal go-between and troubleshooter between Ali Osman and Dr. John, the role of the US was absolutely fundamental. Without the engagement at all levels, including the president, President Bush, waving carrots and sticks, we would not have got the agreement. I want to particularly highlight the role of two people, Secretary of State Powell and Charlie Snyder in his various capacities.

Another challenge was dealing with potential spoilers. There were tensions on both sides within Khartoum as well as among southern leaders, and in the SPLM/A. Both leaders met challenges at home, but overcame them.

Darfur was another challenge. The book shows how Darfur was held hostage by the peace negotiations in Naivasha. Our attempts at creating fast-track talks on Darfur and backdoor negotiations to resolve the crisis in 2004 and in 2005 never got off the ground, partly due to resistance from several quarters. Later, Darfur took most of the attention in many ways, holding implementation of the CPA hostage. If this was a deliberate strategy from some quarters, it certainly was successful.

So, why are we now, six years after, in troubled waters? While the interim period was intended to lead to a transformation of Sudan making unity attractive for the southerners and other marginalized peoples in the country, the death of late Dr. John Garang, the chairman, was a significant blow to such efforts. The leadership team that delivered the CPA was cut in half. The partnership was gone. Others were taking more of the reins in Khartoum, and those who found it

more opportune to slow down implementation did so. Implementation of the CPA was questionable and bumpy.

One could, of course, tick off a number of actions embedded in the agreement as “done” on paper. Laws had been passed and commissions had been established, but the transformation that was to follow never came whether political, democratic, or with regard to decentralization of power and resources. For most marginalized peoples in the north, the clear feeling was that of status quo. And it did not help that attention of the international community turned elsewhere during most of the interim period. Darfur was one. It clearly proved difficult for the international community to deal with the Sudan comprehensively, and to see the problems in Darfur and the rest of the country as interlinked; in fact, as quite inseparable. Clearly the two major factors that delivered the CPA were not forcefully present to push implementation: the partnership at the top level, and coherent and high level international pressure.

The result was that unity was not made more attractive. Southern Sudanese sentiments for independence only grew stronger. Already in 2007, and even though we’re talking about serious business, I want to quote a common joke from Southern Sudan and it went like this: two men were talking to each other, looking at the girls passing by and I know that men do that sometimes. One says to the other, “Have you seen that girl named Unity? I’ve not seen her in a long time. She used to be so attractive.” And the other responds, “Her? Oh, no. She departed a long time ago.”

This was also confirmed in a number of opinion studies conducted by the National Democratic Institute covering thousands of people. A Kakwa chief from Yei put it this way, “We will be divided, even children know that.” So as Sudan faces its most critical moment in history, we need to learn the lessons from the CPA negotiations. The international community has a significant role to play and, I would say, even more so now than during the talks.

Several scenarios can unfold. The most positive one would be that the results of the referendum are respected, and here we appreciate the messages that President Bashir came with this week. But we also need agreement on critical post-referendum issues including Abyei, establishing good neighbor relations in a whole host of areas. On these latter issues, virtually no progress has been made.

If the referendum is not respected, on the other hand, it could trigger a return to war between the north and the south. Khartoum is well aware of this. It is not likely that any of the two parties deliberately want to reignite Africa’s longest civil war. And that is also the background, I think, for the statements this week, but it can still happen inadvertently. If the outcome of the referendum is questioned or seen as illegitimate, there will be outbreaks of violence, and they can spin out of control. This could lead to a unilateral declaration of independence for Southern Sudan which, in turn, would lead to violence that could take a life of its own.

Such a scenario can also be deliberately triggered if political forces find this opportune. Southerners may also be victimized with episodes of vengeance in the north against Southern Sudanese and expulsion of southerners from the north. The critical factor here will be leadership on both sides and in the international community.

Allowing the situation to get out of hand can lead to more violence, possibly involving proxy militias and clashes in the disputed border areas. There are enough hotspots in Sudan, the oil producing Abyei being the worst to make this a

high-risk scenario. A domino effect can set a vicious circle in motion. The fact that the referendum in Abyei is not taking place on time and a solution for the area is still pending is of significant concern.

The last report I got from people returning from Abyei this morning is that the situation is very tense. The Abyei incident in May 2008, when the whole city was burnt down and tanks fired at each other for four hours shows what can happen. Accidentally, I was there at the time on a UNICEF mission. I was on my way to Ali Osman's house when I got critical information from Juba, and with the SRSG's permission, I got Vice President Taha to call his colleague, Salva Kiir, to stop the fighting. But the damage was done. The town was burnt down and the guns were fired, but they were silenced and the fighting did not escalate.

They controlled the situation because the parties had an interest in retaining peace. It is this factor that will be decisive now as well. The way to avoid worse scenarios is to speed up the process on resolving the critical post-referendum issues and to do so urgently. This means border demarcation, cooperation on oil and pipeline use. It means freedom of movement of goods and services, and economic cooperation. It means border control and citizenship, just to mention a few.

The popular consultations in South Kordofan, Nuba Mountains, and southern Blue Nile are other worrying factors. The way to avoid worse scenarios from happening here is to show that these are the marginalized areas in the north, these and others actually, experience that core elements of the CPA count for them. It works for them, too: inclusiveness, power sharing, transformation, implementation of the agreement. The management of the popular consultation in both these areas are critical.

All these factors will have a decisive influence over the future of Sudan after a possible division of the country. Because the situation in the north is fragile and needs to be managed very carefully, apart from the pressing crisis in Darfur, episodes of violence can slide out of control in Abyei, in Southern Kordofan, Blue Nile, the eastern region, parts of the South, or in other border areas. This is extremely risky, and tensions and violence can spread across all of them. The key is the parties' own interest in retaining peace and the role of the international community in waging peace.

Dr. John outlined this scenario in June 2005 in his speech to the Security Council warning that these areas could drift back towards war. I'm referring also to the desperate situation in Darfur and in eastern Sudan, and he stated that, and I quote, "That would lead to a scenario of a failed state in the Sudan. The very scenario we wanted to avoid in the first place by signing the Comprehensive Peace Agreement," end quote.

I will go even further. The risk is not only a failed state, but also fragmentation of Sudan as a whole. Sudanese leaders stand at a crossroads. The decisions they make today and the next 6 to 12 months will be decisive for the future of their country. So CPA showed a new direction for Sudan, also for the north. Implementing the agreement, in letter and in spirit, will prevent the worst case scenario from becoming a reality.

It is my hope that leadership and maturity on both sides, and among the leaders in other marginalized areas will prevail, and a strong and competent engagement by the international community will prevent such a worst case from ever becoming a reality. If there is one important lesson to learn from the negotiations

that ended Africa's longest civil war, it is the need for engagement, continuous, coordinated, and forceful at the highest level from the international community. The same leadership is needed now.

As former Secretary-General Kofi Annan says in the forward to the book, and I quote, "It is a sad truth that waging peace is so much harder than waging war," end quote. Yet, this is our responsibility. Waging peace in Sudan is more important than ever. In fact, it is now that the job really begins. Thank you. [Applause]

**Hoge:**

Hilde, thank you very much. We're now going to go to the time where our two discussants will speak, and then after that, we'll engage the whole room. So first, I'd like to call on Assistant Secretary of State, Susan Page.

**Susan Page:**

Thank you very much. It's a pleasure to be here and, of course, I want to thank Hilde Johnson for the role that she played in the negotiations, especially the role behind the scenes. I think that in looking at the situation in Sudan, I agree with Hilde's commentary that leadership on both sides is necessary. I think the international community, unfortunately, wasted a lot of time by turning their attention away from the north-south implementation, and moving on to Darfur, and treating these issues as separate. And I think now we have realized that that was a mistake, that what was learned from the north-south negotiations could very well have applied to Darfur, and that some of those same situations could have been applied.

I think the parties do have an interest in peace, and this is also outlined in Hilde's book, but there are really serious issues that have to be addressed. My own take is that, I think that on the referendum, we have heard very good comments from both sides. There are some worrying trends as always with lack of freedom of speech, with people, perhaps, being intimidated whether they want to vote for independence, or vote for secession, or vote for unity, and making sure that an inappropriate choice is not forced upon people.

But at the same time, I think that things will be reasonably calm in the short term, but I worry for about a year from now when there are the popular consultations, which really is not a very fruitful process for the people of Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile, because it does not allow them much room except to suggest alterations to the CPA as it applies to those two areas. They make the recommendations to their state legislatures, and then the national government can decide whether to make those alterations or not, but I think that that's where we will have some tension.

And then, of course, as Hilde mentioned, I think the fact that the Abyei referendum looks like it is not going to be resolved via referendum, but may very well be resolved through negotiations as the parties have been negotiating the deal, different aspects of that, and there is always a risk when you go outside of what has been agreed. I think I'll leave it there, and allow for Suliman also to comment. Thank you.

**Suliman Baldo:**

Thank you. I'm very honored to share this forum with Hilde and Susan. At the time, they were involved behind the scene in Naivasha and during the process. I served as the senior analyst for the International Crisis Group, and later as the Director of the Africa Program. We monitored the process, analyzed its dynamics and progress, but, more importantly, followed developments on the ground in terms of the response of different constituencies in Sudan to what was

happening, their expectations from the peace process, and the emerging crisis in the east and in Darfur.

For us, if you followed the reporting from ICG at the time, which was very regular, at a pace of a report or a briefing paper every six weeks, the constant stream between total focus on the north-south situation and then, Darfur as it gained prominence, was really detrimental because the problems of Sudan are one and unique. It is the discrepancy between an all-humanic, politically, economically, culturally center, and marginalized regions, the most marginalized being Sudan in the South, but this is the same issue at play in Darfur, in Southern Blue Nile, in the Nuba Mountains, in Abyei, in eastern Sudan, and even in the north in fringes along the river Nile, which is considered as a power base of the ruling elite.

Therefore, the north-south, the referendum that is taking place on Sunday is, indeed, very important in the sense that this is in the north-south issue, the last chapter of the CPA or the beginning of the last chapter, rather, but other issues remain, and we need to turn attention to the holistic approach that is needed to address them.

Over the last weeks, several developments occurred that are of great concern. The government in the last week of December withdrew from the Doha Peace Talks to resolve the Darfur crisis. At the same time, the Justice and Equality Movement, the most militarily significant movement in Darfur and the Sudan Liberation Group and even the one that signed the full peace agreement, the Minni Minawi faction, stayed out of the talks. They are biding their time, waiting for the outcome of the referendum so that they can push their ceilings of demand from Khartoum to obtain concessions similar to those of the CPA with regard to power-sharing, general devolution of powers to the states, and wealth-sharing and recognition of the rights of the victims in the region.

To pre-empt that, we are witnessing an escalation in the violence in Darfur with the government seeking the crushing down of the military capacity of the Justice and Equality Movement of the Minni Minawi faction and of the other groups. Especially Darfur is deteriorating severely as we approach, you know, the referendum.

A second concern is that it's well and good, you know. We could hear a sigh of relief from the international community when Bashir visited Juba and gave all those reassuring statements [in the north], post-separation with the South, there will be a return to a full Sharia law constitution. Islam will be the religion of the state, Arabic the only language. No such nonsense as positions to diversity, which he saw as a tool for diluting Islamic law.

The response from the Southern Blue Nile and governor of the Nuba Mountain governor, both members of the SPLM, was immediate. At a press conference in Khartoum, they reminded the public and the government that together they have combined fighters who were not demobilized after six years of transition that are more than the whole collection of the whole number of Darfuri fighters. And that if there were concessions, you know, if there was an abandonment of the concessions made in the CPA, however little, Sudan, to the Nuba Mountains to the Blue Nile, you know, the threat was very, very, you know, barely veiled operating toward in South Blue Nile and the Nuba Mountains area.

My concern is a convergence of armed disturbances between Darfur, Southern Blue Nile, and Nuba Mountains in the event that Khartoum doesn't change its conduct and its approach to the whole problems of Sudan: the issues of identity,

the issues of citizenship, the issues of the need to accommodate and recognize diversity. And, of course, there are all these other ones that you flagged, you know, the failure to resolve any of the contentious issues that should be addressed prior to the referendum and post the referendum. Therefore, I see really the aggressive, international diplomatic effort from the international community and Sudan neighbors as needed as never before to preempt all this, you know, disintegration from happening. But the real situation on the ground is one of real concern. I will stop here and I'm sure the discussion will highlight all these issues. Thank you.

**Hoge:** I was just asking Hilde if she wanted to say anything more before we go to the floor, but she said no, she'd like to hear from the floor. So if you would simply raise your hand, I'll recognize you and wait for the microphone. Right here in the front row, Meiko, two in the front row. We'll let the lady go first. If you would please – actually, can I ask you to stand because there's so many people in the room? Sorry to do that, but otherwise they might not hear you and please identify yourself for us.

**Sorosh Roshan:** Good afternoon. My name is Sorosh Roshan. I'm a medical doctor originally from Iran, and I just came from Sudan two weeks ago. I went for a medical project, and I only was in contact with the women of Sudan. I was in Khartoum. I was very impressed with the Women's Union of Sudan and very highly educated women that I had the privilege to meet and speak. My question is: were women of Sudan involved in the peace negotiation? And I talked to them about this referendum, but I will not discuss that until I hear everybody else's opinion. Thank you.

**Hoge:** Patrick will take a second question, and then we'll wait to answer them both at once.

**Patrick Hayford:** Yes, my name is Patrick Hayford from the United Nations. I would like to thank Hilde and the other panelists. The first question, given the importance of the international engagement, would the panelists care to comment to what extent has the US government, the Obama Administration and the others, Norway and the UK, is there that high level engagement on a consistent coherent basis which, Hilde, you mentioned was so critical. That's my first question. My second question, what about the role of Sudan's neighbors? Would anyone care to comment? Because the neighbors have very important interests at stake, so I would like to hear what comment they have on that. Thank you.

**Hoge:** We'll take both questions at once. Hilde, do you want to start with the women question?

**Johnson:** Yeah. Women were not at the table in the talks in Naivasha largely due to the choice of delegations from both sides. And as international players, whether it was the IGAD negotiation team or us that played a backdoor role, there was no role for us to push them to delegate authority to others than the ones they chose themselves. However, what we tried to do was to support a consultative process with women's groups and women's organizations, and also convene a major conference after the Peace agreement for them.

I want to honor the role of the Netherlands in this regard. They had a series of women's consultations, women's groups, and civil society meetings throughout the process to try to ensure that there was involvement and engagement. From the Norwegian side, we hosted the Donors' Conference in Oslo 10 – 11 April, 2005 and in connection with that, we hosted the first kind of global, in Sudanese

terms, meeting, women's organizations meeting from all over the country covering, and they also had pre-meetings. So that was the first in its nature. I think that really covered and captured everyone. So we did make attempts, but we didn't get far enough, but that was not, in a sense, our decision. What I wanted to comment on was the question that you raised in terms of the Troika. Should I, can I go straight to that?

**Hoge:** Please, please.

**Johnson:** I think the— for some reason or another, the Troika wasn't revitalized before 2009. So there was a loss of time. Everything isn't dependent on the Troika being established, but it was an extremely well-functioning cooperation. That, in a way, functioned up to 2005, and then for some reason withered away, and I think that was a loss, a major loss of opportunity.

I think what has happened is that since 2009, there's been a significant attempt at playing catch up, not only with the Troika, but also with other international players. We're now in a situation where, I think, there are forceful players addressing this. The Obama Administration has put an additional strengthening of their team with Princeton Lyman, with another envoy for Darfur, plus the influence and role of Hillary Clinton, and Obama himself. As we all know, we were here in September where he was the keynote speaker at this high level meeting with heads of state. So there is a much stronger engagement.

I think the difference now is that there are many players, more than before. Thabo Mbeki is playing the role for the AU panel on a number of the post-referendum issues, and it doesn't seem to me to be adequate coordination between the different actors. So there's quite a number of voices, there's also different opinions expressed about the negotiation issues, and I think that is a weakness because we need to ensure that there is coordination coherence. It's natural that there are more players. When we did negotiations, it was different because then you had to have a tight-knit little group. You couldn't share everything with everyone. But we did have the IGAD partners forum where we did brief and coalesce all the different actors. So we need some kind of model in the same direction, but one needs to allow more presence.

But one needs a much stronger coherence in coordination in terms of how one does it, who does what when, and what is the message, and that's where I see inadequate implementation at the moment. And may I just make one point? I think the honors to the Secretary-General who organized the meeting in September, I think it was a major, very important event, and it really was critical, also the Security Council meeting of foreign ministers that took place a little later in the fall. These are the things we should have seen from 2005 onwards, but it's never too late in a sense, but that was a critical process, and I hope that those types of meetings will take place going forward as well.

**Hoge:** Suliman, you're the only Sudanese on the panel. Would you comment on the attitude of the neighboring countries? What they could do, what they are doing?

**Baldo:** I count among the neighboring countries African institutions, you know, IGAD was the key mediator and the chief mediator then, you know, Sumbeiywo led the process with determination and resolve, and didn't allow much room for, you know, wavering for the parties. You know, he really drove them with the assistance of the Troika, and he got partners into that process.

Sudan today has no less than four former head of states from Africa trying to help the Sudanese parties resolve their issues, and Sudan's neighbors have been quite involved. The issue is really the coordination. I find myself here agreeing with Hilde that they need to be the same level of focus and coordination that existed through the IGAD Secretariat. That's what is lacking, but it is not the lack of goodwill in the international community or the regional involvement and that of Sudan's neighbors or the concern of someone like Museveni in Uganda, for example, or the role of Kenya are all very important as the role of Sudan's northern neighbors. We saw Hosni Mubarak and Qaddafi flying together to Khartoum to try and moderate Bashir after that statement, you know, this is recently, the second half of December. So even North Africa is, you know, seeking a constructive role in this. But there are just too many initiatives and not enough coordination.

**Hoge:** Susan Page.

**Page:** Yeah, I just wanted to comment a little bit also about the women. Hilde's right. We didn't have a formal role, but each delegation actually did have a woman on their delegation.

**Johnson:** True.

**Page:** And so, I think it's sort of important to note, though, the role that they played. And the initial joke early on was, "Actually, the Sudanese aren't so far apart. They each have one sort of, you know, representative, one woman representative," and that was a sad commentary. That was on the northern side, the NCP would generally bring someone in to represent, you know, the women and children. And on the SPLM side, to their credit, it was a much more substantive and economic advisor who is actually now one of the Vice Chairmen of the SPLM.

But we also did as part of the Secretariat, we did hold a lot of meetings with a number of groups, and actually, Hilde mentions this in her book which is that although not a formal role, we did try to brief regularly others who were outside of the peace process so that they would actually be included and to try and build in more inclusiveness even though the parties themselves really had rejected that notion of broadening to even other political forces, let alone civil society. So that was one thing.

I wanted to comment also about the high level engagement, and I think one of the things that also hurt, not just the Troika, but that hurt the process was that you have to understand, in terms of the role of the neighbors, IGAD is a Horn of Africa group made up of the neighboring Horn of African states, and immediately after the peace agreement was signed you had – well, before the peace agreement was signed, you had a change of leadership in Kenya.

Kenya was the chair of the subcommittee for Sudan under IGAD, and there was a lot of tension about whether or not the new president, Mwai Kibaki, was going to keep on General Sumbeiywo as his chief mediator. After much weighing in from the international community, quite frankly because he was so close to President Mwai, he agreed to keep him on, but to remove him from his chairmanship of the Army. And then after the peace agreement was signed, within a year, the Secretariat for Peace in Sudan, based in Nairobi, was disbanded. And that was, I think, one of the biggest setbacks to the whole peace process because as actually everyone has said, that body was able to coordinate actors. I mean, there were times when General Sumbeiywo would have to just tell people, you know, "We couldn't accommodate all of the interests and people

that were trying to come in,” because they would interrupt the peace talks so that they could have a private discussion with one side or both sides, and then they would not be, actually, getting on with the rest of the business. And so, he tried to build in specific times when other armed groups could come and have a session, and they could have two hours, but then they had to leave.

But without that anchor, there was really no other mechanism to get people involved, and even with the Assessment and Evaluation Commission, there was pretty weak engagement by IGAD in Khartoum. And then when they established the similar mechanism in Juba, again, not a lot of robust engagement. And then lastly, I think, in terms of both the role of the neighbors, but also high-level engagement, whether it's the US, UK, Norway, and others, I think the ICC indictment, which no one has actually mentioned yet, has really complicated things. And it's not a question of what you believe should take priority, justice and accountability or peace, and that they should even necessarily be in dichotomy, but the simple fact is that we spend a lot of time—I can speak, at least, for my government; I don't know about the others—but we spend a lot of time talking about whether or not we should send a representative of the US government to event X where President Bashir is likely to be attending, instead of using this opportunity to have those meetings with him in order to help to consolidate this fragile peace process at this particular moment.

So again, it's a delicate balance, and I'm not trying to say which is right, but a lot of energy does get spent, I would assume probably in all of the governments that support the ICC process, and it just makes it very difficult to move forward to get the buy-in from the top to make the referendum go peacefully because we're conflicted about engagement with somebody who's been indicted by the ICC.

**Hoge:** Susan, is it actually official American policy not to send a US official to an event that Bashir might be in?

**Page:** Well, this is why I think we spend a lot of time, because if we had an official policy, maybe we could actually follow it.

**Hoge:** I'll take some more questions. Benny Avni over here and I'll take a couple of others if – we'll take them as a bunch, but if there's not, we'll just let Benny ask his question solely.

**Benny Avni:** I'll ask two questions.

**Warren Hoge:** I know you will, and Benny, stand up please so they can see you in the back.

**Avni:** I'll ask two questions. First of all about the past, first one about the adverse –

**Hoge:** And identify yourself, even though I've used it your name.

**Benny Avni:** I'm a columnist for *New York Post* and other outlets. First about the past, one about the future. About the past, could you give us– one name I didn't hear from all the description you gave is of that of John Danforth? Could you give us a little bit about his role earlier on? Secondly, about the future, the idea of amicable divorce is that might work this time, which is great. Could we try to apply the same in other places especially Ivory Coast where division along north-south, ethnic, religious groups might also be ripe for that kind of thing?

**Hoge:** There is, indeed, mention of Jack Danforth in the book, so I'll let Hilde take that.

**Johnson:**

Yeah, the role of Jack Danforth, first. I could have mentioned him too in the list that I did, but he's got a very prominent place in the book. I think his role was most significant in two phases: one when he first took over and helped reignite the peace process, get it on track, had the first full tests that he presented to Khartoum and the SPLM/A held him to account, and used that as an avenue to really move the peace process forward. That was very, very important. He was playing a more critical role in the initial phase, and then in the final stage than in the middle.

In the middle, I think Colin Powell had a more important role in terms of his phone calls to the parties, et cetera. What is also revealed in my book, which is why I said all levels in my intervention, is that President Bush himself called Bashir around ten times during these talks, which is also a quite significant engagement. So I think Jack Danforth, towards the end when he was also now the Ambassador, the Permanent Representative of the US in the UN, played a very significant role. He convened the November 2004 Security Council meeting in November, which set the firm deadline for the completion of the talks. Mind you, what had happened then was that in the period before, we had had such hullabaloo, if I can use that term, on Darfur that the guys remained in Khartoum. I mean, they did not want to come to Naivasha to complete the negotiations.

The only thing that was missing, then, was the implementation protocol. They had negotiated all the protocols for all the substantive issues where covered, but for the implementation protocol, they did not want to come. I mean I talked to Ali Osman, I don't know how many times between June and almost October. It was a complete standstill; just some working level negotiations. So it was instrumental that Jack called the Security Council meeting in November, that he prepared that well with the parties, and that he started referring that deadline for the completion of the talks. Absolutely critical. I'm giving him a lot of praise on both of those accounts in the book.

Second, your second question is, of course, the big-ticket question for Africa, no? Where the colonial powers used the liner and drew the Africa map across whatever was their interest without looking at the ethnicity or anything else and, of course, where the African Union is extremely nervous for anything that can set a precedent for ethnicity being the dividing line for borders in Africa going forward. So the nervousness around this has always been significant because then there is no end to where the splits can come. And so I think the critical thing in this case is I haven't seen lately and I'm very happy about that, this issue being brought to the forefront as an argument in relation to Southern Sudan. I think there are very few examples in Africa of a civil war that has, more or less, lasted with a few years of exception since the, actually, the very beginning of the nation, since 1956. And so you have a very distinct case.

I'm not arguing one or the other here, but I'm seeing—because they have to decide themselves—but I'm seeing that argument less used now, and I'm pleased about that. I don't think, my personal opinion, I don't think this will set a precedent for other African countries and I'm not sure that anyone should argue that either. The reason being that we know that the Sahel belt is full of a number of conflicts along the same lines as Sudan which—and Nigeria, of course, is another case in point—which would open up a Pandora's box for the continent. So I don't think an amicable divorce is necessarily amicable in any of these countries, hence, not likely to be a good solution. But I think it's fundamental that in some cases there are legitimate reasons for people to have self-determination, and I think that was what the international community decided to sign up to with supporting and guaranteeing the CPA. But again, it was seen as a fallback

solution. We all wanted, I think, unity to be made attractive so that marginalized peoples could have, within the country, their rights be preserved and delivered upon. Now, of course, it's up to the Southern Sudanese to draw a conclusion as to whether this has happened or not.

**Baldo:** With regard to the question of ethnicity, it's often ruling classes that instrumentalize ethnicity whether in Côte d'Ivoire or in Sudan. For example, as a way of waging warfare, Khartoum would raise ethnic militias. But they did raise ethnic militias even within south Sudan, they have 31 socio-ethnic militias. It's a tool by ruling elites in Africa and it's most severe in Sudan, it's coming up in Côte d'Ivoire, but by no means is it necessarily the case that populations are addressed along these ethnic divides and seeking autonomy. There are important ethnic minorities in northern Sudan that definitely are not seeking independence or autonomy, but they are seeking recognition of their right to difference, of having their own interpretation and their own way of living their Islam, of having their own culture, and social practices, and rituals, and the like and then staying within the same country.

**Hoge:** I was going to ask Susan, picking up off of Benny's question. I think I heard you hint at what we commonly see now in Africa, which is the unity government solution. We saw it in Zimbabwe. We saw it in Kenya. We had seen it in Sudan. It may be what Gbagbo in the Côte d'Ivoire is holding out for right now. What is the US position on that?

**Page:** Thank you very much. [Laughter] I'm going to go back to the question, which was about an amicable divorce, and I tend to agree, actually, with Hilde on this one that under the African Union Charter, self-determination is allowed as long as its through a process that is sort of recognized. What is not permitted or what is disfavored are unilateral declarations of independence. So on the international law front, that's really the distinction and that's where you have a Somaliland, which didn't have a process; they just unilaterally declared independence.

So I think one of the things that you want to make sure is, at least from all of our conversations with both the northerners and southerners, is that that things should be done in accordance with the agreement that they signed up to, and through the process of the referendum, and if the vote goes for a vote for secession, then that should be upheld. But to not have one side or the other be pushed into something where they declare it unilaterally, which would make it very difficult for African states to actually uphold and accept. So I think that's that distinction. I'm not going to speak too much about Ivory Coast because I don't really think this is the forum, but I will just say that I think Ivory Coast is a very different circumstance, and it's not a Muslim, ethnic divide in quite the same way, and also as Hilde mentioned, this is not a country that has been at war with itself. I mean, I think it's very much more political in Ivory Coast than it is ethnic or religious, so I'll just leave it there.

**Hoge:** I'm happy to say we have the Ambassador of Sudan here, would you please take the microphone?

**Daffa-Alla Elhag Ali Osman:** Thank you. Sorry, I came just a few minutes late because I had another commitment which I should attend. I missed the chance to follow the course of discussion, but I took the floor just to comment on three things. The first is not a comment, it's just an appreciation for the excellent role played by Hilde Johnson for the Comprehensive Peace Agreement conclusion. We cherish that very much, Hilde. We followed that closely in Sudan. And the second point is that I have to mention that I didn't also find the chance to read the book. It has been

given to me two days back, and I read the three or first four pages of the book. But I found the four pages very important; very important and that will allow me to emphasize an important point. That point is, I think, if my memory serves me well, she mentions, in the second page, that the whole thing or the initiative of peace in Southern Sudan was initiated by Mr. Ali Osman Mohammed Taha, the Vice President of the Sudan when he called her asking for her support and assistance to mediate with late John Garang to come and meet with him in Nairobi. So that shows that the policy of the government of Sudan is genuine about peace, not only in the south only, but for all parts in the country which suffer from conflicts. This has to be underlined.

The second point I would like to comment on is that, and I heard the gentleman asking whether this will be a precedent for other African countries to suffer from this phenomenon of secession, I would say yes. Because as has been rightly said from the floor here, our fathers of independence in Africa, when they sat down sometime during the early '60s to put or agree on the charter of the African organization of the African Unity at that time, they discussed this issue of political borders. And as you know, all the political borders in Africa were designed by the colonial power in a very arbitrary manner. I will give you one example. If you look at the borders between Sudan, Chad, and Central Africa, you will find it a straight line, just like this, coming from the north to the south. And this line continues for more than 1,300 kilometers. That line divided not only the same tribe, but even the same family sometimes, and you find both parties, or both portions, of this family scattered between Sudan and Chad.

This applies to all of Africa. That is why the fathers of independence agreed not to touch this Pandora's box. And unfortunately, unfortunately, the President of Southern Sudan, I have to make here a reservation to say that we are fully committed to the referendum. We are fully committed to the outcome, but that doesn't deprive me from saying it is very unfortunate. It's going to open a Pandora's box for Africa and I really wonder why those who supported this secession from the international partners did that. At the time, we all know that we are living in a globalizing world whereby small entities are getting together. They are conglomerating to face the challenges of globalization. Why are we helping the south to secede to become a small enclave both to be deprived from being, living in a big entity with which they can share everything. This is a question. I leave it for the researchers and for the peace-loving people, really, not for politicians who have in their minds certain agendas, and they do not bother about Africa and, I would say, poor countries.

Third point. The Comprehensive Peace Agreement is a historical agreement in Africa. Why? First of all, before I say that it met all the needs and the requirements of our brethren in the South, it has laid down the system of governance in Sudan, and this is an aspect which I request Hilde to just illustrate, which is not very well-illustrated. Let me just shed some light on that. The Comprehensive Peace Agreement stipulates that the Sudan will be governed through a multiparty system. Multiparty system. So democracy is the system of governance and nobody would be able to renege on that.

And that Comprehensive Peace Agreement gave our brethren in the south the right to participate in governing Sudan with one-third in the federal government, and gave them all the right to have full autonomy in the South. This is regarding the governance. Now, wealth-sharing: they have every right to enjoy all the resources in the north and full right to enjoy all resources in the South. So why would they secede? What does that serve? And if there is no trust, let me answer this question by saying when the Comprehensive Peace Agreement when was

signed, it has been guaranteed by many mediators from the West and by the United Nations, by the African Union. Those are the guarantors who will ensure the continuity of this agreement. So nobody would be reneged on that. Then, again, I ask the question: why should we help such a serious, injurious phenomenon, not to Sudan only, but to all Africa? That will create a lot of havoc, I would say. For those who think that will not cause a problem, if not tomorrow, maybe after sometime. In many African countries, I have heard a few names mentioned. Those, the seeds of conflicts are already there in those countries whether due to ethnicity, or religion, or economic grievances, or you know, saying that they are marginalized, all these factors are found anywhere. I should stop here and thank you very much. [Applause]

**Hoge:** For the first time in my experience, a high ranking American official has asked me if she can have permission to go to the bathroom, and I said yes. So it certainly is nothing the Ambassador said that is sending Susan Page to the bathroom. She'll be back in a moment. Would either of you like to comment on the Ambassador's comments or shall we just go ahead?

**Johnson:** I talked about the same issues, so you can just proceed.

**Hoge:** All right. Any other questions, please? In the back, very good.

**Ali Hayat:** Thank you, Ali Hayat, Charney Research. If the outcome of the Referenda is—occurs as we expect it to and the south secedes, how adequately have we anticipated the challenges that the independent Southern Sudan, Sudanese state might face in terms of challenges that may be internal as well as external?

**Johnson:** Good question.

**Hoge:** I should tell you, Charney Research is the polling organization that we use at IPI, so I'm very happy to get a question from them. Hilde, do you want to respond?

**Johnson:** This is a very good question and it has been raised quite a lot in advance of the referendum. There was never a conditionality introduced in relation to the referendum, so the rights to self-determination stands, whatever the situation is in the South. At the same time, there's no doubt that the international community has a major responsibility as have Southern Sudanese leaders, as actually have Sudanese leaders in the north because whatever happens, both the south and the north are actually so closely interlinked in every way that it's not possible to cut the cord. In particular, of course, in relation to oil resources where the pipeline is going out of Port Sudan, and when the resources are exploited or explored, sorry, in the south largely, at least 70% of the resources. So you have a situation where there is interdependence and very strongly so on the economic side. So you have a situation where there need to be solutions of neighbor relations, if I can use that term. We're now talking about a scenario where Southern Sudan becomes independent, and that is absolutely fundamental. So you need to have leadership on both sides where these issues are sorted out.

Then on the governance side, of course, Southern Sudan started on zero or minus whatever in 2005, and the fact that very, very limited institutions had been built of governance, of ministries, et cetera, completely from scratch. And, of course, you had a situation where people that had been carrying AK-47s walked into the Minister of Finance and were suddenly Ministers of Finance. And so that is a completely different situation from many other post-conflict countries. Then we have been using, I think "we" in the global sense, the international community, the Sudanese for six years to try to build that capacity and that

competence. And I have to say, and this we will look—, see in the book as well, on the peace building side, a very mixed bag, I think, in terms of performance, both from the international community, but to some extent also from the government of Southern Sudan which, I think, could have done a somewhat better job in the area of governance and anticorruption, for example, as the rest of the country. This is often the curse that follows oil resources.

But where they've done a very strong job in establishing ministries, trying to establish good, functional arrangements, functional government, Juba, the capital, is working very well. So you have a number of those institutional factors in place, but still extremely weak capacity.

On the international community side, I have to say a very, very, very limit, mixed in terms of performance on the development assistance side as well. We also found from the pledges provided at the Oslo Conference, we saw that a significant amount of the resources pledged by donors went to Darfur because of the humanitarian crisis. And you had a lot of humanitarian assistance that were just stopped in the South, and then the post-conflict construction funds were so slow that they didn't come for 18 months to two years. So you had actually, for some people, you had a worse situation with peace than you had with war where services that were earlier provided by NGOs in health, education just disappeared because they were not funded from donors. And partly, and I'm very self-critical in the book for those of you are interested in aid, and multilateral donor trust funds, and the World Bank, and things like that, some interesting stuff you'll find. Because clearly the worst case was the MDTF [Multi-donor Trust Fund for Southern Sudan] where it's one of the worst that has been seen globally where the disbursements in two kind of results in tangible outcomes for people came only after, I would say, almost three years. So you had a very, very slow process. And so I think we can't see a repetition of that performance now after a referendum. So the donor community will have to rethink how to support this new government, or this new state, this new country and look at key factors that are essential for peace building, both pillars in the political on the security as well as on the inside. And this I could continue to talk about a long time, and I won't, but clearly, we can't repeat some of those mistakes. We have to do things differently.

**Hoge:** Actually, I wanted to ask a question about what the UN should be doing, and I think I would ask Suliman, maybe you're better placed to answer that because I don't want to put you, Hilde, on the spot with your new position.

**Johnson:** Thank you.

**Baldo:** As usual, the UN has responsibility in terms of the logistical support and technical support for the referendum itself and in the panel observation of the process. There's unity in south Sudan now around the referendum, but it is, you know, very expected that this unity will be very much tested in the immediate aftermath of the referendum. Many regional, ethnic, localized tensions occurred, and the SPLM would really have to change conduct to be more accommodating of different constituencies in the South, and tolerate independent opinion, and dissenting voices so that there is stability in the South, and economic prosperity. The UN would have a role to assist in containing localized violence because there is localized violence as we speak now over resources, over grazing lands, and cattle rustling, for instance. But also with dissenting commanders of the SPLA breaking away, the integration of the SPLA having been done in a way which was not totally really integrated in the sense that the units preserved their ethnic composition and their traditional command structure from the prewar period. And when there are localized frictions, this translates into local

commanders taking sides and so on, so the UN would need to do a lot in helping contain that. I believe there is, you know, therefore a need to be very vigilant on the side of civilian protection because of all this. Coordination of humanitarian assistance, of course, is also necessary.

**Hoge:** We have time for one more question..

**Bertha Ormeno:** Thank you. Bertha Ormeno from the Peace Building Fund of the Peace Building Support Office, and this is in relation to or follow-up of the previous two questions, actually in terms of whether UN can do or can find through the funding or the funds that exist now. If you were to prioritize areas where the UN can fund programs to be implemented, specifically for Abyei, and given that contextual situation and the forthcoming referendum – Sorry. Should I repeat, though?

**Hoge:** I don't think you're being heard in the back. You have to hold that microphone very close to your mouth.

**Ormeno:** Very close. Okay. I'm asking that if you were to prioritize any areas where the UN can provide additional support in addition to the international cooperation and the political support. In tangible terms, in Abyei, for example, would you say that DDR, or a small arms control or IDPs or any other basic social services, which one would you say is the priority for UN further contributions?

**Johnson:** Should I answer?

**Hoge:** Sure. Please.

**Johnson:** Are you asking specifically for Abyei or?

**Ormeno:** Yeah.

**Johnson:** Abyei is the most militarized spot in the whole Sudan. I mean, we have two battalions standing against each other, and we have tanks ready. They have been agreeing to remove the tanks from the proximity that were there for quite a while around the 2008 incident, so they're further away, but they're still very close. I don't think in that environment that necessarily DDR and small arms control is the key issue because these are tanks and battalions. So I think in terms of Abyei, there I don't think there's much else than a political solution that needs to be found.

We note that the referendum is not being held on time, and I'm very concerned about that. We know it's extremely tense at the moment, and some solution needs to be found. Without a political solution, I don't think anything else will help, to be honest. That is just a political deal that has to be made. And the international community will have to monitor that it's being implemented, whatever the parties agree to, and I think whether it's Thabo Mbeki that negotiates that, or it's the UN SRSG that does it, or the Troika comes in, that's not my cup of tea, but that has to happen. And I think nothing else, then, will have any significant impact. This is a political decision that has to be, of course, monitored politically and on the ground. Then we need to also have the presence of peacekeepers that can act if something would happen, which is another road, which wasn't the case in 2008. There was presence, but they were not able to protect civilians in the way we were hoping that they could. It was also related to mandate and who was deployed where, and a lot of issues, but that's another story. Should I proceed to –?

**Hoge:** Proceed to finishing comments.

**Johnson:** So, I think this has been a very interesting and useful discussion, and I actually want to be very brief. But I want to make essentially two points and this is points that also are generic, I believe.

One, the international community, and now talking about all of us broadly, we have a tendency to sigh with relief every time a peace agreement has been signed, and then we do this [applauds], and we think the job is done. At least the main job is done. But it actually is the contrary because peace agreements are ink on paper. There's signatures that we sign. I was lucky to be able to sign it and I even signed it twice. I don't think it had a significant impact because I'm not the implementer. And the international community tends to repeat the same mistake over and over again. It is to sigh with relief and do this after a peace agreement has been signed. Yet, the job starts the day after the peace agreement has been signed, and it's much tougher, implementation of any peace agreement is much tougher than negotiating a peace agreement. It's obvious. You're supposed to act, right. You know, you're only supposed to deal with each other across the table, you're supposed to sort out the problems every single day, and you have to do it together, which is even more difficult because they haven't worked together. They have sat around the table together, at least in Sudan they did, uniquely, in one room alone and sorted this out. So we need to learn that there is more need for support, pressure, cajoling, massaging, you know, actually negotiation-type engagement from Day 2 and onwards. And without it, we cannot expect peace agreement to be implemented in full.

I'm not taking any responsibility away from the parties because it's theirs first and foremost. But the point is that it's tough and difficult, and we need to push, and we need to support, and we need to help, and I think in this case, we just didn't do it enough, and I think that is a generic lesson that we need to learn globally. It's the same in a number of other countries, and we're seeing the same. Why is it that more than 50% of peace agreements relapse back into war? Hmm? It's that reason plus a number of others, but it's an important factor.

And I think the second point that I wanted to make is that in terms of Sudan, if there is one case where this engagement is more needed than in any other country, it is the largest country in Africa. It has 450 ethnic groups and languages. It has more complexity and diversity than any African country I know, and I think it is the country which has more conflicts in the past, and we don't hope in the present and in the future, but it is in the past than I think any other country that I know. Hence, the need for that engagement is more significant there than anywhere else, and the need for a unified voice is more important than anywhere else because there are diverse voices from the international community. And the environment, the environment that we're in now is not going to help. It's going to undermine what we're doing. So the job with peace agreements starts the day they have been signed. Secondly, we need to be able to be part of that implementation process, and to do it with much more rigor, and force, and leadership than we have done so far. In Sudan, it's late in the day and we can, but we still can avoid a fragmentation scenario from becoming reality, but we will not manage to avoid it unless we also engage. The decision is by the Sudanese, but we are part of the solution as well. Thank you.

**Hoge:** Those are perfect concluding comments. The book is out back for sale. Suliman, Susan, Hilde in particular, thank you very much.